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he took part with the other men of the kraal. Indeed, any man who touched a menstruating woman or anything belonging to her, or ate together with her or even came near her, was regarded as "extremely defiled", and obliged to purify himself before he could again mix freely with other men. It is to fear of such contamination, as we have seen, that Kolb ascribes the habitual separation of the sexes at meals.[1] Le Vaillant, again, states that among the Gonaqua a menstruating woman would isolate herself at some distance from the rest of the community until her period was over, when, purified by bathing, she could again mix with the people.[2] These descriptions are obviously incomplete, but they serve to show that the conception of *//aun* or taboo attaching to a menstruating woman among the Naman existed also to some degree at least, among the other Hottentot peoples.

Boys' Puberty Ceremonies

Although the Hottentots no longer observe any special rites connected with the attainment of maturity by boys, there is evidence enough in the literature that such rites existed in the past. Like the other Hottentot transition rites, they involved, among the Naman at least, a period of seclusion, with all its accompanying restrictions and final reintroduction to the incidents of ordinary life. But they also embodied a definite course of instruction, in which certain customary usages and laws peculiarly applicable to men were impressed upon the initiates. These rites seem to have been essentially of an individual character, in that as a rule only one boy at a time was subjected to them. On occasion perhaps three or four boys might be found undergoing them simultaneously, but this was by no means regular or necessary. In this respect among others, therefore, the Hottentot puberty rites for boys differed fundamentally from those of the North-Western Bushmen, where, as we have seen, there must always be a group of boys being initiated together.

No man was allowed to marry until he had passed through these rites. They served chiefly to initiate him into the ranks of mature men, and above all conferred upon him the privilege of habitually associating, eating, and smoking with these men. Boys who had not undergone the rites ate only with the women, and were regarded as milksops. It is upon this aspect of the rites that Kolb lays emphasis

[1] Op. cit., vol. i, end of preface; cf. (English trans.) *The Present State of the Cape of Good Hope*, i, 155, and c.
[2] *Voyage dans l'Afrique*, ii, 40.

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in describing them as they existed in his time among the Cape Hottentots. Until, he says, the boy is initiated, generally in about his eighteenth year, he must remain under the direct control of his mother and associate with the women at meals; he may not eat even with his father, let alone set himself up as a man. When at last his father, or the men as a whole, resolve to receive him into their company, all the inhabitants of the kraal assemble in the open space in the middle, where the men sit down in a circle. The initiate, smeared all over with fat and soot, squats down beyond them. The oldest man present then asks the others if they are willing to admit the boy into their ranks; on receiving their acquiescence, he steps up to the boy and informs him that henceforth he is freed from submission to his mother and that he must no longer associate with the women. Then the old man urinates freely over the boy, at the same time wishing him good fortune, fertility, a ripe old age, and similar blessings. This done, all the men feast on a sheep provided by the friends of the boy, and the latter now joins them. He is thus confirmed in the privilege of associating, eating, and drinking with the men, and leaves behind him the reproach of being a milksop. The word *kaxire*, by which according to Kolb uninitiated boys are derided as being attached to women's company, is equally offensive when applied to a mature man. He may not rest under it, but his case is examined by the men, and if the accusation is upheld he is excluded from their company until he has purified himself by slaughtering a sheep. This the men eat, while he himself receives only the fat and the entrails, which he must cook with the animal's blood and consume.[1]

The situation figuring so conspicuously in Kolb's description of this and other ceremonies has been seized upon by many later writers as an instance of romantic falsification. But although there is much in his description of the Cape Hottentots not altogether above suspicion, he is confirmed on this particular point by other reliable authorities. Thus Thunberg, writing at the end of the eighteenth century, says: "The custom is not quite laid aside of making youth, at a certain age, men; from which time they are separated from the women, and associate only with men. After the youth has been besprinkled, according to custom, with urine, some animal is killed, and its omentum, or caul, is tied about his neck."[2] And Wilkie, in describing the boys' puberty ceremonies among the

[1] Op. cit., 59-60. [2] *Travels in Europe, Africa, and Asia*, &c. &c.

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can be little doubt that it merely represents the ceremonial reintroduction of the boy to water, just as in all the other rites of this nature the person undergoing the rite must be reintroduced to water. Campbell's version of the rite is that the entrails of the animal killed at the beginning of the ceremony are dried and pounded to powder, which is mixed with water and then rubbed all over the boy. The latter is then in the presence of the whole kraal declared to be a man.

With this rite the initiation is brought to an end. The boy is now a *doro-eib*, a man allowed to sit at the fire (*doro*) and eat in the company of the other men of the camp. As such he is bound to observe various usages with regard to eating. Some of these have already been noted in Olpp's list of precepts, but he adds a few others. If it happens, for example, that while the meat for the *doro* men is on the fire a dog unexpectedly snatches a piece from it, then all the meat becomes impure, and another animal must be slaughtered. Again, a pot in which hare's flesh has previously been cooked must first be cleaned out with fire before it can be used by the men, and in any case it must not be used if an entirely new pot can be procured. Any man violating these prohibitions, and, for example, eating hare's flesh, whether because of necessity and excessive hunger or simply without noticing, may not again eat with the other *doro* men until he has been purified. He may not even light his pipe at a fire at which *doro* meat is being cooked, but must fetch a light from another place, if he has no matches. For the rite of purification a friend must give him a young lamb, which he slaughters himself. The blood of the lamb is then boiled and handed to him by his friend; if he cannot drink it all, the remainder must be buried in the ground. Next he washes himself with the contents of the stomach, and then he and his friend consume the flesh of the lamb. After this meal he may once more eat together with the other men. Anybody sharing for the third time in breaking these taboos, adds Olpp, is cast altogether out of the company of the *doro* men; but no indication is given as to his future lot.

Andersson also mentions the taboo on hare's flesh, adding that it is forbidden even to come into contact with a fire on which a hare has been cooked. If a man breaks the rule, he is not infrequently banished from the kraal, but on the payment of a fine may be re-admitted to the community.[1] Another obligation, mentioned by Alberdie, is that grown-up men must refrain from milking a cow,

[1] *Lake Ngami*, p. 189; cf. Wilms, *op. cit.*, 108.

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since this is beneath their dignity, and anyone "who condescends to perform this part of the domestic tasks" would be expelled from the company of the men.[1]

It will be noticed that among both the Cape Hottentots and the Namas the essential feature of the boys' initiation rites seems to be the fact that it gives him the privilege and right of henceforth associating on equal terms with the mature men of the community. This privilege is apparently of some significance, for we find that whoever violates any of the customary norms of conduct is not permitted to mix again freely in the company of the men until he has been purified. This exclusion may perhaps be due to the ritual impurity in which the man finds himself, and which will make it dangerous for him to associate with the others. At the same time it suggests that the *doro* men form a distinct social group within the community; and Kolb's general statement that men and women among the Cape Hottentots habitually are apart is of some value in this connection, as lending support to the possibility that there was in Hottentot life a well-defined alignment of the community with the men on the one side, and the women and children, including uninitiated boys, on the other. But on this point we have not nearly enough concrete information.

It is worth noting also that these rites are fundamentally different from the corresponding ones among the Bushmen. In both cases, it is true, we have seclusion, and the form of bodily mutilation is scarification; but even the nature and purpose of the scarification, as Mrs. Hoernlé's general analysis of the Hottentot rites shows, are markedly different, while the place of seclusion also differs. The Bushman boys, again, are initiated in groups, the rites are intimately connected with hunting, and they also serve to introduce the boys to the tribal religious mysteries. The Hottentot boys, on the other hand, are initiated individually, and the rites do not appear to have any connection with either hunting or religious mysteries. The moral rules and the food restrictions imposed upon the boys cannot be regarded in the same light as the revelation of *Heaven* to the Bushman boys. The Hottentots, as we shall see, also believe in supernatural beings, somewhat similar in nature even to those of the Bushmen, but there is nothing at all to indicate that these beings are revealed to the boys at initiation.

The Hottentot puberty rites for girls also differ considerably

[1] "Reisebeschreibung ins Innere Hottentotlands," etc.